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ABSTRACT

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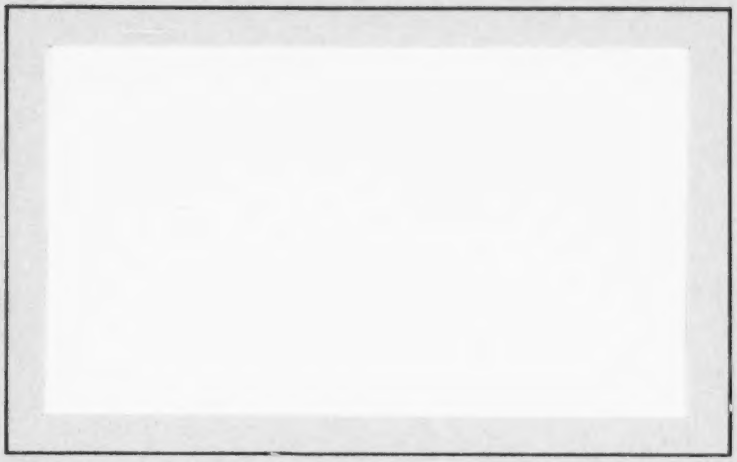

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Report No. 72-2

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(abstract)

Patterns of psychoactive drug usage of students at an heterogeneous university were surveyed in 1968, and the Class of 1972 was twice resurveyed. Changes included increases in use of all drugs within the Class of 1972 and between juniors of 1968 and of 1970 for popular drugs other than alcohol. Later starting students were somewhat less likely to be narrowly characterizable demographically, and appeared less positive and committed toward their present and future usage. It is suggested that usage became more routine in meaning in students' lives over time, and thus the characteristics of eventual usage patterns cannot be obtained by extrapolation from early patterns.

Judging the Shape of Things to Come: Lessons Learned From Comparisons of Student Drug Users in 1968 and 1970[1]

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In the wealth of drug surveys only a relatively small amount of attention has been given to changes in patterns of use over time and to the meaning and to changes in meaning of use. In the fall of 1968 we assessed the usage of 17 psychoactive drugs, along with demographic and attitudinal data, of all students enrolled full-time at Carnegie-Mellon University, a heterogeneous private school with 4500 students (Goldstein, Korn, Abel and Morgan, 1970). Using a mail technique, patterned after that of Eells (1968), which preserves the anonymity of respondents on the questionnaire but which allows identification of which students have responded through the returning of a separate card signed by the respondent, we obtained a 68% return rate. The nonrespondents were only moderately more likely to be high use types of students than low. The freshmen in the original survey, the Class of 1972, were remeasured at the end of their freshman year (61% return rate), and at the beginning of their junior year (63% return rate). In order to provide cross-sectional as well as longitudinal comparisons, data from the 1968 Juniors is also provided here.

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Table 1 about here

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Table 1 presents data on selected drugs for the three measurements of the Class of 1972 and for the Juniors in 1968. The LSD entry includes other hallucinogens such as mescaline. The marijuana entry includes hashish. Longitudinal comparisons within the Class of 1972 indicate that usage of all

substances increased (percentage differences of 7 to 8% are significant at $p<.05$ in the table). Cross-sectional comparisons of Juniors in 1968 and 1970 indicate that the latter class is exceeding the former class in use of all substances except beer and hard liquor which have declined in use. The heroin/opium users in 1970 strongly resemble their marijuana or LSD using peers in demographic and attitudinal characteristics and usage patterns. The remainder of this paper will discuss changes in the meanings of usage accompanying these changes in extent of use, for LSD and expecially for marijuana. We shall draw conclusions concerning the predicting of subsequent usage from knowledge of initial usage patterns.

Who are the users? Demographic characteristics, usage patterns and personality patterns of users in 1968 have been described (Goldstein, et al, 1970; Goldstein 1971, in press). In brief, users of marijuana (and the trends are even more pronounced for users of the more 'exotic' drugs) were found to differ in 1968 in many ways from their nonusing peers: they were more likely to be from upper middle class urban or suburban families, secular, liberal politically, and to prefer the humanities, social sciences and fine arts as academic majors. There was no relationship to sex of the person, grades in school, or frequency of participation in extra-curricular activities. On the California Personality Inventory freshmen marijuana users were especially high on the social presence and flexibility scales, and especially low on the sense of well being, responsibility, socialization, communality and achievement via conformity scales. Users believed in the safety of marijuana on a number of dimensions and, in general, might be parsimoniously characterized as having approach (desire to feel differently) plus lack of avoidance (belief in drug safety) motivation.

Analyses of the characteristics of those Juniors in 1970 who had begun marijuana use since the initial survey compared to Juniors in 1968 reveal that the growth rate in use was the same for males as for females. While the extent of use among students majoring in fine arts remained about constant, there were sharp increases in the percentages of users of frequency 11 times or more ($\geq$ 11x) majoring in humanities and social science (from 19% to 46%) and in such formerly low use fields as mechanical, electrical and chemical engineering (from 7% to 18%). The highest increase in family income categorization was a jump from 10% of $\geq$ 11x users to 35% in the $15,000 to $25,000 group. The 1970 $\geq$ 11x users rated themselves even more liberal politically than the 1968 juniors, however there was a drop from 27% to 16% in respondents saying that their political position could not be represented on the liberal-conservative scale, and an increase from 7% to 16% in respondents saying that they are "not particularly interested in politics" in this usage category.

Usage patterns. The currency of $\geq$ 11x marijuana use originally was high (80% had used within the month and only 4% had not used for 6 months or more), and it stayed that way (81% within the month in 1970 and 5% had not used for 6 months or more). The currency of LSD use decayed considerably, however: 40% of the 1968 users had used within the month and only 30% had abstained for at least six months, but in 1970 only 25% had used within the month and 52% had abstained for 6 months or more.

Students' indications of their future intentions to use these drugs reflected less certainty of future use for both 1 to 10 time marijuana users and $\geq$ 11x users. Interestingly, the nonusers and the 1-10 time marijuana users both made much more use of the "don't know" category in 1970. Among those students with 2 or more LSD experiences the intention of future use was lower

in 1970 (from 44% saying they "definitely" would use again to 25%). As with marijuana, "Don't know" and negative intent responses increased for both users and nonusers of LSD.

Experiences resulting from and reasons for usage. We asked student users to respond to a beneficial-harmful evaluation item taken from Eells (1968). In general for both marijuana and LSD experiences usage was seen as much more beneficial than harmful or unpleasant, and this relationship is stronger for heavier users predominately because lighter users report a much higher incidence of "no particular effect, either beneficial or harmful" (46% of the 1-10 time marijuana users in 1968, and 64% of them in 1970). Likewise, 7% of the LSD users reported "no effect" in 1968 and 16% in 1970. While experiencing harmful effects was seldom mentioned by marijuana users either year, there was a considerable increase (24%) in users mentioning mixed effects or experiences which were "mostly harmful or unpleasant, but not seriously so." "Very disturbing" LSD experiences were reported by 7% of the 1968 and 6% of the 1970 users.

Comparisons were made between the reasons given by 1968 and 1970 juniors who had decided not to use or not to continue using marijuana. The reasons given by nonusers in both years were basically the same: a lack of desire to experience the drug (60% and 56% respectively), although there was a sharp increase in concern over illegality of use and possible arrest (from 9% to 20%). Concern about harmful effects among nonusers was given as the reason by 22% of the earlier juniors and by 17% of the later junior class. Among the students having some marijuana use there were more shifts in the reasons given: an "unsatisfactory personal experience" fell from 19% to 9% and "difficulty in obtaining the drug" fell from 16% to 10%. Concern over the illegality of use

increased from 19% to 28%, and "no desire" increased from being given by 21% to 30% of these students.

Students were asked to report the reasons why they had used LSD by selecting responses from long lists. In 1968, 35 reasons were given and fell into the following categories: hedonistic (pleasure, sociability, etc.) - 20%, inner developmental (inner exploration, religious experience, creativity, etc.) - 66%, and instrumental (relieve sadness or depression, improve sex or learning, etc.)- 14%. In 1970 there was a notable shift in the 78 reasons given: hedonistic - 44%, inner developmental 46%, and instrumental - 10%. Also, another 46 reasons were given as due to "curiosity" - an option not available on the 1968 questionnaire.

Conclusions

While the data discussed here represent but a small part of that from an on-going project, in them may be glimpsed a process of routinization of drug use on the campus. While the data on usage patterns of the Class of 1972 as freshmen were not presented here it should be noted that they were far closer to those of the Juniors of 1968 than to themselves as Juniors in 1970. As usage diffused thorugh the campus it continued to permeate categories of students most likely to use in 1968 (e.g. humanities students) while reaching previously unlikely types (engineers).

Those students who began after our initial survey seem more conservative in their usage as judged by their greater likelihood to indicate a political position on a traditional liberal-conservative scale or to be uninterested in politics, by being less current in their LSD use, by being less sure of future use of marijuana or LSD--perhaps because their experiences were not as positive as those of the students who had started earlier in the drug scene on the

campus. Failure to use or to continue marijuana use shifted from having to do with unsatisfactory experiences and difficulty in getting the drug to increased concern over the illegality of use and to a greater tendency to express "no desire" for beginning or continuing use. Reasons for using hallucinogens became more predominately hedonistic and curiosity-satisfaction.

It is as if the later users had to overcome resistances toward using which prevented them from beginning as early as the other students. Further, these inhibitions seem to have stayed with them to a greater extent than with the early-starters (comparisons with their classmates who started use before college entrance places the latter as the most positive toward future usage). This suggests that the first users are not exact harbingers of things to come in student drug use patterns, but represent an exaggeration of modal use patterns which diffuse through the student body after them. Elsewhere we have suggested that earlier users have a greater need for self-defensive cognitive belief systems (Goldstein, 1971).

Footnote

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Table 1

Extent of Drug Use by Percent for College Freshmen and Juniors by CalendarYear

Drug and Frequency of Use	1968 Freshmen[a] N=792	1968 Juniors N=459	1969 Freshmen[a] N=507	1970 Juniors[a] N=447
Amphetamines				
any use	7	16	16	21
≥ 11x	1	4	5	8
Barbiturates & Tranquil.[b]				
any use	11	14	not asked	23
≥ 50x	3	3		7
Beer				
any use	70	89	76	81
≥ 50x	11	50	16	44
Hard Liquor				
any use	58	91	84	82
≥ 50x	7	42	13	28
Heroin and Opium				
any use	3[c]	2	4	5
LSD, etc.				
any use	1	4	7	16
≥ 2x	1	2	4	5
Marijuana				
any use	18	31	28	52
≥ 50x	3	5	7	16

[a]Class of 1972 surveyed longitudinally

[b]Indicates use of either drug

[c]The ratio of heroin to opium use in 1968 was 1:3 among the Freshmen and 1:5.5 among the entire student body.